

A NEW BLETIA FROM MEXICO

BY

CHARLES SCHWEINFURTH

IN A SMALL COLLECTION of orchids from northern Mexico collected by H.S. Gentry and sent for determination by Dr. Forrest Shreve of the Desert Laboratory (at Tucson, Arizona) of Carnegie Institution of Washington, appeared the following species which seems to be undescribed.

Bletia amabilis *C. Schweinfurth sp. nov.*

Herba terrestris, speciosa. Folia plura, prope basim, imbricantia, elliptico-lanceolata vel lineari-elliptica, longe acuminata, vaginis duabus cylindraceis fulta. Caulis fistulosus, glaber. Racemus laxis. Flores spectabiles, grandes. Sepalum dorsale elliptico-oblongum, acutum. Sepala lateralia oblongo-elliptica, acuta. Petala obovato-oblonga. Labellum medio profunde trilobatum; lobi laterales semiobcordati; lobus medius obcordatus, profunde bifidus. Discus carinis quinque percursus. Columna valde arcuata, superne dilatata.

Plant terrestrial, up to about 9.4 dm. tall (doubtless becoming taller). Base of the plant enveloped by two imbricating tubular scarious sheaths which appear to be finely more or less reddish-maculate, from above these bracts issues a cluster of three imbricating erect-spreading leaves. Leaves elliptic-lanceolate to linear-elliptic, up to about 23.5 cm. long and 5 cm. wide (the uppermost much narrower), long-acuminate, convolute, many-nerved with five to seven more prominent nerves, sub-membranaceous. Stem stout, fistulose, glabrous, provided below with one tubular appressed scarious sheath which is 3 cm. long. Raceme very loosely 12-flowered, arcuate-flexuous near the summit, about 23 cm. long

inclusive of the terminal buds. Floral bracts ovate-lanceolate, very long-acuminate, concave, many-nerved, the lowest one about 1.8 cm. long. Flowers large and showy, rather membranaceous. Dorsal sepal elliptic-ob lanceolate, acute, about 4 cm. long and 1.4 cm. wide, 7-nerved with numerous reticulations. Lateral sepals oblong-elliptic, acute, about 4.1 cm. long and 1.5 cm. wide, 8- to 9-nerved. Petals obovate-oblong, falcate, nearly 4 cm. long, about 1.5 cm. wide, very shortly acute or subacute, 6- to 8-nerved in the middle with numerous reticulations. Lip deeply 3-lobed near the middle with the mid-lobe deeply bilobed, about 4.2 cm. long to the tip of a terminal lobule, about 3.1 cm. wide across the widest part of the lateral lobes, very shortly clawed and abruptly rounded to subcordate at the base; lateral lobes semiobcordate, broadly rounded at the apex, about 1.3 cm. wide where broadest; mid-lobe nearly sessile, obcordate, minutely but broadly apiculate in the deep median sinus, about 2 cm. long to the tip of a lobule and 2 cm. wide near the apex, with the margins irregularly crenulate and undulate-plicate. There are five approximate median keels which are scarcely more than thickened nerves through the basal third of the lip, are abruptly dilated into high thin semielliptical plates near the middle of the lip, and then decrease into low keels of which the outer pair are relatively lower and extend about to the center of the mid-lobe; the inner pair which are higher than the outer pair are gradually dilated to an abruptly truncate apex near the anterior third of the mid-lobe; the central keel, which is lower but stouter than the ones beside it, is slightly dilated at its apex where it terminates close to the median sinus of the mid-lobe. Column strongly arcuate, gradually dilated above, about 3 cm. long, winged on each side with the wing some-

what dilated just above the base; margins of the clinandrium irregularly lobulate.

Another specimen of the same collection shows the following discrepancies. A detached fragment consists of a moniliform cluster of three small approximate ellipsoid rugose corms which produce fibrous flexuous roots; two of these corms are adorned at the summit with the short remnants of a stem. The entire plant is smaller in all parts than the type; the cauline bract is somewhat above the middle of the stem and three of the flowers of the shorter raceme appear to issue from one point of the rachis.

Another collection (*Gentry 2473*), which is referable to this species, appears to be in an advanced stage of anthesis, since it bears two immature capsules and a single flower at the summit of the raceme. It differs from the type in having commonly longer leaves (the uppermost of the three blades 31.6 cm. long), in having a rather lax raceme (about 30.5 cm. long) and smaller flowers of which the segments are 3 cm. or less in length.

This species appears to be allied to *Bletia campanulata* La Llave & Lex., which is a plant difficult to interpret adequately. It differs from our conception of that species, however, in its somewhat broader leaves, broader lateral lobes and deeply bilobed mid-lobe of the lip which bears yellow markings. It lacks the striking claw of the mid-lobe of the lip which characterizes *B. macristhmochila* Greenm.

MEXICO: State of Sonora, Sierra Charuco, Río Mayo. "Upper Sonoran; oaks, shaded humus. . . . Terrestrial in soil. Fl. lavender, laterals yellow with purple veins, upper lip purple". July 23, 1936. *Howard Scott Gentry 2302* (TYPE in Herb. Ames No. 49093): State of Chihuahua, Guasaremos, Río Mayo. "Upper Sonoran; tolerant oak slope. . . . Terrestrial with lavender flowers". August 26, 1936. *Gentry 2473*.